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ABSTRACT

Traditional academic approaches to the study of rhetoric must be modified by those who explore the rhetoric of black Americans. Black rhetoric is inherently interactive, combining verbal, tonal, musical, and physical behaviors, whereas traditional white-oriented rhetoric can be viewed in terms of standard verbal and literary aspects of communication. Pertinent investigations of black communication must relate to the white-controlled communications media, which are components of a complex American consumer-technology system that imitates, absorbs, and neutralizes hostile or non-integrated phenomena such as student dissent and black protest movements. Areas which demand increased attention in this context include: (1) the interactive patterns of black rhetoric; (2) the interaction between black methods of communication and the white-controlled media; and (3) techniques by which poets, novelists, and dramatists depict the complexity of black communication and the tensions between blacks and whites. (Included are course outlines for three related courses on the subject.) (RN)

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THE IMAGE-MAKERS

BLACK RHETORIC WHITE MEDIA

According to conventional academic usage, "rhetoric" is the effective use of language, the specialized literary use of language, or the study of such usages. But here, as elsewhere, the student of the Black experience needs to redefine established, technical terms, particularly those which have been narrowed by self-serving academic specialization. Hence, any comprehensive study of Black rhetoric should start with the recognition that a purely verbal or alphabetic concept of language, and consequently of rhetoric, imposes arbitrary and artificial limits on the subject. The Euro-American's simple distinction between verbal language and other modes of communication may be an obstacle in the field of Black rhetoric. For the study of Black rhetoric requires approaches and definitions which synthesize structures and forms instead of dislocating and isolating them into categories that are meaningful only to the rhetoricians, grammarians, linguists, and all of our scholarly categorizers. Indeed, the Black man's "use of language" often combines verbal usages, tonal improvisations, musical forms, and even physical mobility into a richly complex structure which requires a broader, more eclectic, definition of rhetoric: that is, the definition of rhetoric simply as communication. Now I am not offering

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an exclusive definition or emphasis. It is not my purpose to set up an exclusivist standard of Black rhetoric which denies the ethnic or political relevance of those Blacks whose modes of communication are based on more specialized, and less integrated modes than those outlined here.

But it is equally important to recognize these integrated patterns as a fact. For they are exemplified by the three-dimensional physical images of violence and exuberance which Miles Davis evokes in his Jack Johnson music; by Major Holley's fusion of the vocal and the instrumental in the Quincy Jones version of Nat Adderley's "Hummin'," or by that generally evocative quality in Black music which justifies LeRoi Jones' description of the jazz musician's riff as "that rhythmic figure we knew he would repeat, the honked note that would be his personal evaluation of the world. And he screamed it so the veins in his face stood out like neon. 'Uhh, yeh, Uhh, yeh, Uhh, yeh,' we all screamed to push him further.'" [1] In this same vein, the literary critic who brings a narrow concept of rhetoric to the analysis of Ted Joans' "jazz poems" will not be equipped to deal with the sardonic finger-popping, and the sustained riffs which build up to an ironic climax in a work like "Uh Huh":

Here it is

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This is really it

Uh huh

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The colored waiting room!!!!! -

And in LeRoi Jones' work the verbal forms of the poet's rhetoric juxtapose the measured cadence of rhythm and Blues with the free-wheeling improvisations of the jazz artist:

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old envious blues feeling
ticking like a cobblestone clock.[3]

The last two lines are the clue to the kind of verbal, musical and physical juxtapositions which Jones is evoking here, and which are so typical of the Black poet's rhetoric. For when read as <u>two</u> lines, both the rhythm and the theme develop the Blues motif of triumphant resilience

in the face of disappointment; but when read as four lines, in two columns, they present us with crackling, riff-line improvisations which (both musically and thematically) sweep us, climatically, from the triumph-in-suffering of the Blues motif, to an even more militant and insistently demanding mood.

Finally, note how typically the rhythms of Langston Hughes' "Dream Boogie" evoke, indeed demand , the reader's physical response, or participation, as an inherent part of the reading/interpretation process:

Good morning, daddy!

Ain't you heard

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And in "Children's Rhymes" Hughes fuses the exuberant physicality of be-bop with the distinctive rhythms of Black speech:

What's written down

for White folks

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Note, moreover, that (1) a simultaneous fusion takes place within the "speech" patterns themselves -- between the conventionally intelligible

sentence structure ("ain't for us a-tall") and the evocative intelligence of "nonsense" scatting ("Daddle - de - do!"); and (2) that as a result of all these processes, the distinction which the poet draws between "us" and what's written down for White folks is not limited to the familiar hypocrisies and double-dealing of White America apropos of Blacks: the distinction also effects a contrast between modes of communication -- between our Black, multimedia style, and their treasured "written down" literacy. All of which, in turn, substantiates Clarence Major's description of Black American English: "gesture and nuance, inflection and innuendo, the entire spirit of the black experience itself, are just as much a part of the cultural basis of Afro-American slang as the collective sense of energy given by the words themselves." [5]

I have been at some pains to emphasize the manner in which Black rhetoric juxtaposes and fuses modes of communication, because all of this illustrates a fundamental characteristic with which my present study is concerned. That is to say, Black rhetoric is inherently interactive: it contains diverse patterns of Black communication (vocabulary, music, dancing) which interact to produce any given structure. But it is equally important to bear in mind that this process is also external: that is, the interaction of Black modes of communication is supplemented by the equally important interaction between these Black forms, and structures or media which are identified with White, Western communication. Let us return to the excerpt from Langston Hughes' "Children Rhymes." The full effect of the passage not only depends on the interaction of Black music, dance,

and vocabulary. It is also derived from another interaction, on an external level, between these Black forms and White Americanisms; or, more precisely, from the dramatic manner in which Hughes literally shatters the staid, mythic cliché of White hypocrisy ("Liberty And Justice/ . . . For All") with the explosive "Huh" -- which prepares us, in turn, for the mock celebration of the be-bop rhythms, and the sarcastic caterwaulings of the scatting in the final stanza .

The fact that Hughes' poem was published in 1951 suggests that the kind of interaction seen here is not some revolutionary innovation of the sixties or seventies. Indeed, this Black-White interaction is one of the oldest traditions in Afro-American literature. But recent trends in Black Nationalist theory, apropos of the Black Aesthetic, imply that there is a pressing need to (a) pinpoint the generally interactive nature of Black rhetoric, and (b) emphasize the extent to which structures in Black rhetoric have traditionally incorporated, and interacted with, White modes of communication. As Langston Hughes' poetry demonstrates, this trait lends itself readily to tension and ironic conflict. And this, the very essence of Black rhetoric, tends to be ignored or minimized by singlemindedly nationalistic assumptions about Black language and communication. Carolyn Rodgers, for example, sets up a clear-cut dichotomy between the "mush mouth/African tonal" of some untainted "Blackness" and the "better English" of the "colonizer's language." [6] And behind Miss Rodgers' antithesis lies the currently popular assumption about impenetrable barriers between Black and White America. Mel Watkins, for

example, claims that the Black audience to which James Brown appeals most -- "the majority, or grass-roots segment of the black community" -- is antithetical to America's mainstream society in both life style and point of view: "It is perhaps the most pervasive aspect of black life: the tacit awareness of mainstream America's absurd posture . . . and the acceptance of a more fundamental and less pretentious life style." [7] Obviously this claim goes beyond the arguments of other Black aestheticians like James Stewart and Larry Neal, both of whom envision these perceptual and behavorial antitheses, not as existing realities, but as desirable goals: Blacks, they argue, need to construct a "particular way of looking at the world,"[8] and in the process they "will destroy the double-consciousness -- the tension that is in the souls of the black folk." [9]

We need not be detained here by the pros and cons of Stewart's, and Neal's, hopes for the future. But it is imperative that we question Watkins', and Rodgers', assumptions about the status quo. For this issue touches upon the traditional and continuing norms of Black rhetoric. Is Black America, together with its modes of perception and communication, completely sequestered from the American mainstream? Or isn't there a relationship of complex and conflicting attitudes: assimilation-and-separation, mutual rejection and mutual imitation, the Blacks' American loyalties, nurtured by Black expectations of America, versus Black Nationalism, encouraged by White intransigence? The pattern is familiar to most students of Black history in America and elsewhere: DuBois analyzed it as our double consciousness, Malcolm X declaimed against it, and Frantz Fanon taught us about the psycho-existential complex of our

Black-skins-and-White-masks. Closer to our immediate subject, Clarence Major, among others, has pinpointed the cultural interaction which shapes the Black American's distinctive vocabulary: "This so-called private vocabulary of black people serves the users as a powerful medium of self-defense against a world demanding participation while at the same time laying a boobytrap-network of rejection and exploitation" (Dictionary of Afro-American Slang, p. 9). And Mercer Cook offers a broad African analogy: "Taking the white man's language, dislocating his syntax, recharging his words with new strength and sometimes with new meaning before hurling them back in his teeth, while upsetting his self-righteous complacency and clichés /African/ poets rehabilitate such terms as Africa and blackness, beauty and peace." [10]

Altogether then, the full parameters of Black rhetoric/communication ought to be viewed as an integral part of a larger process -- the dynamics of the relationship between Black and White culture. In other words, distinctive Black modes function through interaction with White structures. And, equally important, but even less frequently noted, the nature and roles of White media add an important dimension to this interactive process. Hence a comprehensive view of the function and structure of Black rhetoric must include its total context -- the overall ethnic interaction between Blacks and Whites in general, and the interaction between Black rhetoric and White media in particular. But having minimized the Black-White tensions within Black rhetoric itself, some of our experts are now in danger of grossly underestimating the psycho-imagistic roles of the White media, and, of course, the Black man's rhetorical reactions to those roles. It is curiously ironical, for example, that Harold Cruse lectures us, in one

breath, on his favorite theme -- our "lack of positive ideas, of what America really is as a nation and the true nature of the Negroes' intrinsic relationship to the American reality," and then, in the next breath, he raises serious doubts about his grasp of that American "reality" and of that "intrinsic relationship" by describing the media as America's "weakest sector." The Black cultural revolution, he argues, will succeed if it attacks this weakest sector -- "film, theater, radio and television, music performing and publishing. . . . In short . . . that part of the system devoted to the economics and aesthetic ideology involved in the cultural arts of America." [11]

But before we launch the glorious cultural revolution we need to recognize (1) the very real strengths of the so-called "weakest sector," and (2) its interaction with Black modes of communication. In this regard the single most important characteristic of White media and their images is the fact that they are, inherently, no less interactive than Black rhetoric. In one area of Black communication -- music -- it has become a truism that White American culture has always been an exploitive imitator, adapting Black musical forms and issuing the White variants as originals. According to LeRoi Jones, "too much exposure to the debilitating qualities of popular expression tended to lessen the emotional validity of the Afro-American forms; then more or less violent reaction to this overexposure altered their overall shape . . . The result was a deliberately changing, constantly self-refining folk expression, the limbs of which grew so large that they extended into the wider emotional field to which all Western art wants constantly to address itself." [12] Frank Rofsky, another

expert on Black music, elaborates on this interactive cycle of Black creation, White imitation, Black reaction and re-creation: "there can be little question among serious students of the music that jazz has inevitably functioned not solely as music, but also as a vehicle for the expression of outraged protest at the oppression of Afro-Americans as a people and the specific exploitation to which the jazz musician, as black artists, have [sic] been perennially subjected in an art of their own creation." And, according to a Black bebop musician quoted by Hofsky, "You see, we need music, we've always needed a music -- our own. We have nothing else. Our writers write like the whites, our painters paint like them, our philosophers think like them. Only our musicians don't play like the whites. So we created a music for ourselves. When we had it -- the old type of jazz -- the whites came, and they liked it and imitated it. Pretty soon, it was no longer our music . . . .

"You see, as soon as we have a music, the white man comes and imitates it. We've now had jazz for fifty years, and in all those fifty years there has not been a single white man, perhaps leaving aside Bix [Beiderbecke], who has had an idea. Only the coloured men have ideas. But if you see who's got the famous names, they're all white.

"What can we do? We must go on inventing something new all the time. When we have it, the whites will take it from us, and we have to start all over again." [13] But these aggressive patterns of imitation and adaptation are not limited to music. They pervade all forms of White media, and they shape the function of images and image-making/ image-distortions in

White society: the news, entertainment, and advertising media are all components of the sophisticated, highly complex, and incredibly adaptive imagistic structure on which America's consumer-technology is based. It is a structure that allows the system automatically to imitate, absorb, and neutralize alien or overtly hostile modes of communication.

Three of the great social movements since the sixties -- student dissent, women's liberation, and the Black revolution -- are cases in point. In the autumn of 1969, less than six months after the nationwide campus rebellions the rhetoric of student dissidence (or, more precisely, versions of that rhetoric) had become a marketing point for a headache pill on television commercials: Enter student radical (from the left-hand side of the screen). There is a studied casualness about his dress -- rumpled jeans and shirt, scruffy and half-clean, and the inevitable long hair. He confronts our hero, a harrassed college president who combines the hallowed expertise of middle age with youthful good looks; in a loud, squeaky voice angrily demands the acceptance of "non-negotiable conditions" (the rhetorical hallmark of all campus militants of course), and slams (violence, too, of course) his list on the president's desk. Exit (self-righteously). Pause. Hero reaches into his desk, languidly, and brings out pills for what is obviously a sudden full-blown headache. And a soothing commentary assures the world that all super-sensitive persons (college presidents not least among them) who are intensely sympathetic to others (especially to insensitive student militants) need Brand X. Superficially, the strategy here is quite straightforward and innocuous: the audience's attention is to be caught simply by

referring to a current topic of controversy, in order to get down to the vital (and profitable) business of selling headache pills. But the process of communication is rather more insidious and complex than this. The selling point is not merely pharmaceutical. It is also ideological. By simplifying the campus issue into a temperamental conflict (unreasonable hotheads versus sensitive and responsible leaders) the commercial caters to, and thereby perpetuates, a meaninglessly narrow morality (good guys versus bad boys) about a crucial social problem. By co-opting and distorting the image and the rhetoric of student radicalism, the commercial persuades the viewer that buying the product is not only a medicinal venture but a deeply patriotic and profoundly moral act: you may now banish two headaches in one multi-purpose, economy-sized package. It is the American way.

And what about women's liberation? The scene is Main Street, Any City, U.S.A.. The likeness of Colonel Saunders beams benevolently down on snarled traffic from a large, well-lit bill board which he shares with the inevitable bucket of Kentucky fried chicken -- and with an eye-catching phrase in bold lettering: "WOMAN'S LIBERATION." Once again, the motivation seems straightforward enough: a very popular talking-point becomes the huckster's attention-getter. But note, too, how subtly significant shifts and distortions in images and language have simultaneously effected a selling pitch on the ideological level. "Women's Liberation," the rhetorical symbol of the feminist revolt, has become "Woman's liberation." The collectivist associations of the original phrase have been replaced by an individual emphasis that evokes "freedom." And, equally important, the exhortatory and prophetic connotations of the original rallying cry

have been shoved to the background of our consciousness by the concrete, three-dimensional presence of that imposing bucket: liberation is now, it is of the present, it is already here. The almost tangible physicality of the Colonel and his bucket is a re-assurance of incontrovertible facts: the fact of Kentucky fried chicken restuarants, the fact of "secret recipes," "herbs," "spices," warm succulence, and not least, the established fact that the little woman has been "liberated" from the stove this evening -- just as she has been freed from drudgery by all the gadgetry of a marvellous technological paradise. The gastronomic image confronts and transforms the feminist's rhetoric: no need for exhortatory threats and prophecies about liberation for "women;" "woman" is already a "liberated" individual, emancipated, enfranchised, and packaged like so many Kentucky fried breasts and legs for our (male) consumption. As for those who agitate for humanistic rather than merely physical liberation, the patriarchical features of the benign Colonel are a sufficient rejoinder: it is a man's world.

All of this is familiar enough in the Black-White interaction which has been proceeding long before the advent of current radical groups. These groups (white radicals and feminists) are, after all, aliens to the status quo, and as perennial aliens Blacks have always provided the media with grist for the image-making mills. Traditionally, the co-opting of Black music has been supplemented by the imitative dilution of Black language: "Funky," once denoting sexual odour and erotic experience, and by extension, experientially suggestive music, has now become a meaninglessly

hackneyed label, exploited by advertisers for their particular product. We now even have "funky" warehouse sales. In ethno-political rhetoric the once electrifying and (to White society) menacing connotations of the Black Power slogan have long been defused by repetitive, and exploitive, variants which sell everything from the Boy Scouts ("Boy Power") and baseball ("Cub Power") to supermarket specials ("dollar power"). Similarly, "Right on!" which was once the revolutionary's exhortative rallying cry has become another meaningless cliché which, at best, merely implies agreement or endorsement of any kind, in the White media. Note, in this connection, that the White "misrepresentation" is really an extension of the more familiar White image of concurrence -- "striking the nail right on the head."

In this latter instance we have a very good example of the built-in ironies in the interaction between Black and White modes of communication. Because of his socio-political relationship with White language (that is, the slave status of the uprooted African was confirmed by his being compelled to drop his own tongue in favour of the slave-masters), and because of the inherently interactive tendencies of his own rhetorical forms, the Black man's language is peculiarly equipped to deal with the imitative and suppressive instincts of the White media. In the West Indies Edward Brathwaite reminds us of the historical relationship since slavery: "It was in language that the slave was perhaps most successfully imprisoned by his master; and it was in his (mis-) use of it that he perhaps most effectively rebelled." [14] And in the United States Clarence Major pinpoints the course of those ironies which have developed in this historical

relationship when he elaborates upon what he calls the "powerful medium of self-defense" in the Black American's vocabulary: "We already know that the most original and revolutionary art form in North America, The Technology Society, has been Black music. And out of the life-styles of the people who make it comes the vernacular that has made possible certain functional concepts -- such as bad meaning good; hard having a positive connotation; killto mean, affect strongly, to fascinate; love letter to mean: a bullet; and murder to express approval of something excellent" (Dictionary of Afro-American Slang, pp. 9, 13-14).

In other words, the juxtaposition of Black and White modes of communication, and the interactive traits on both sides, have created a context in which Black rhetoric anitcipates, and self-defensively subverts, patterns of White imitation. Consequently, the verbal forms of Black "vernacular" are really a species of connotative irony: for as antonyms of their White American counterparts, they are literally booby-traps in the path of the co-optive White media. As we have already seen, the exhortative connotations of "right on!" have been missed or distorted during White popularization which has been based on White colloquial definitions of "right on!" as a confirmative. Clarence Major's sample quotations from the Black American's vocabulary follow a similar pattern of built in, connotative irony. And this process of anticipation and entrapment is also dramatized by the interactive functions of another Black form -- "It ain't shit." Here we have two negatives -- the structural "ain't" and the connative "shit." Now, according to the precise logic of orthodox grammar, this double negative translates into conventional

English as a positive emphasis ("It ain't shit . . . It ain't no good . . . It is not bad . . . It is good"). But this is the very kind of imitative logic that Black rhetoric anticipates and subverts, for, of course, the original phrase is not a positive emphasis but an emphatic negative.

Hence, on the one hand, the popularization of Black rhetorical forms like "right on!" and "It ain't shit" has distorted and diluted original connotations so that they may conform with the cultural logic of the White media. But, on the other hand, the ironic effects of the interaction confirm that this vulnerability to the White media is counterbalanced by the inherent ability of Black rhetoric to anticipate and transform White imitativeness into the advantages of connotative irony. In addition to the longstanding musical interaction (Black creation/ White imitation/ Black reaction and re-creation) we also have a verbal pattern of interaction: Black coinage/White parody/Black irony. But although the Black musician's role in these interactive relationships is well known, the verbal areas of interaction have been neglected, especially in so far as they affect, and are exploited by, the Black American writer. Indeed, as we have already seen, Mr. Kofsky's Black musician dismisses the Black writer merely as someone who writes like Whites. But with due deference to our musician-critic, we need to distinguish between the Black writer who uncritically imitates White forms and the artist whose ambivalent attitudes towards his White forms (novel, poem, play) are informed by an awareness of the ironies that are inherent in the interaction between these White media, on the one hand,

and, on the other hand, the ethnic images or value systems which his rhetoric embodies. And once this distinction has been made, it will become clear than an entire area of Black literary rhetoric still remains unexplored.

Neither is this area a new phenomenon in Black rhetoric. The Black writer's rhetoric has always been a crucial example of the interactive nature of Black-White communication. And it is this interaction that informs the themes of communication in a writer like Paul Laurence Dunbar:

> We wear the mask that grins and lies
> It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, --

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Of course we have always been familiar with the <u>perceptual</u> theme of the poem --at least those of us who have refused to be distracted by all that historical nonsense about Dunbar being an "Uncle Tom" poet. On the perceptual theme, Dunbar is emphasizing the White American's inability to perceive the realities beneath the Black man's vivacious mask. But this theme is linked to the ironies of communication which are built in to the relationship between the Black poet and his White reader: (a) the Black writer's readership is predominantly White (b) these readers are conditioned to perceive Blacks

and the Black life-style as grinning bon vivant stereotypes which assuage White guilt (c) this image of Blacks, combined with the White literary norms of poetry as a written medium, establishes a tension between the poet's ethnic consciousness, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the White criteria of his medium and the majority of his readers (Incidentally, Dunbar's obvious sensitivity to the tastes and motives of his White enthusiasts may very well be the single most important reason for his notorious reluctance to write only so-called dialect poetry). In short, the poet's rhetoric is rooted in an intense awareness of the conflict, and interaction, between what he is trying to communicate and what his readers perceive; and since the mask metaphor conclusively states White inability to perceive, then the rhetorical structure of the poem sets up an in-group awareness versus the mythic image-making of "outside" readers -- between "we" and "the world," "us" and "them." And, as usual, from this flows the connotative irony of the in-group rhetoric; since Whites are psycho-pathologically blinded to the realities of the Black experience, then it follows that the image-making processes of White society will ignore or distort even this poetic moment of unmasking. In effect, Dunbar has exploited his White literary medium to achieve the same kind of connotative irony which is characteristic of verbal forms in Afro-American English. His rhetoric anticipates and interacts ironically with the preconceptions and expectations of the White (literary) media. And in order to appreciate the soundness of Dunbar's ironic insights into White literary media, we need only remind ourselves of his own continuing reputation, in some circles, as a kind of genial Uncle Tom who grinned rather

than protested.[16]

In our own time LeRoi Jones' poetry actually relies on Afro-American English in order to establish the kind of ironic anticipation, and interaction, that Dunbar achieves in orthodox English. The rhetoric of a poem like "Black Art," for example, is obviously based on those "functional concepts" which Clarence Major has attributed to Black "vernacular." So that the title "Black Art" anticipates the pejorative connotations of the phrase (the 'black arts') in White communication, then interacts with those connotations by establishing opposite meanings. Black art, that is, Black poetry, is not evil but good, not destructive but creative. The semantic transformations which LeRoi Jones effects with his title therefore go to the heart of those ethical and aesthetic transformations which the entire poem investigates: Black poetry is ethnically creative when it destroys the ethnocentric assumptions of the White aesthetic; it is good when it rejects the narrow, Puritan morality of White hypocrisy in favour of a frank acceptance of life in all its vitality and physicality; and, in this vein, Black art is functionally effective when it rejects abstract, esoteric concepts of art, in favour of that art which plunges into the "real" world of flesh and blood:

> Poems are bullshit unless they are
> teeth or trees or lemons piled

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come at you, love what you are,
breathe like wrestlers, or shudder

As for the esoteric contention that art exists for art's sake, and that art should rise above the "hip world" of flesh, blood, and pissing, from <u>that</u> point of view works like "Black Art" are bad -- that is, they are didactic, violent, even anti-Semetic:

Another bad poem cracking
steel knuckles in a jewlady's mouth.

And having anticipated this White image of Black Nationalism (violent, militant, extremist, reverse racist), Jones juxtaposes it with the opposing viewpoint which is connoted by "bad" ("baaad") as the Black American's word for "good." Hence this pivotal passage in which Jones expands upon a <u>non</u>-White view of art and social morality is literally integrated with the distinctive patterns of anticipation and interaction which we have already observed in the "functional concepts" of Black English.[17] It is important that we apply this kind of close textual analysis to a writer like Jones, because the tell-tale ironies of White literary history have already, unwittingly, established a rough analogy between his reputation and Paul Dunbar's. That is, the interactive and complex patterns of Jones' poetic rhetoric are disguised by a seemingly simple and straightforward anger which has been taken at face value by outraged and frightened White critics -- in much the same way that similar critics concocted a narrow view of Dunbar by seeing only his grinning mask. But -- and this

is what establishes a crucial link between both poets -- in anticipating and mocking the White critic's reaction, and the White media's response to their poetry, both writers fully demonstrate that exquisite connotative irony which they derive from the interactive patterns of Black literary rhetoric.

But above all, Langston Hughes still remains unsurpassed at this kind of rhetoric. For he repeatedly demonstrates an uncanny ability to reproduce and exploit more than one level of interaction in Black rhetoric. As we have seen, a poem like "Children's Rhymes" combines the internal interaction -- that is, the interplay of verbal, musical, and other elements of Black rhetoric -- with the external interaction between Black rhetoric and White media. Hear him again, in "Dream Boogie":

Good morning, daddy!
Ain't you heard

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The boogie-woogie beat, the connotative irony of "daddy" (great White father) are combined into a Black rhetorical mask which anticipates, interacts with, and sardonically panders to, the White Father's need to see Hughes' boogie woogie

woogie and Dunbar's grinning mask as expressions of undiluted happiness. And, in turn, this multiple interaction explodes the "dream" reference into three, ironically juxtaposed meanings: (1) the Black man's ("deferred") dream of fulfilment in America (2) the larger American Dream of liberty and human dignity which will remain only as a self-serving White myth as long as the Black man's dream is deferred and (3) the dream or illusion which White Americans foster about their "decency" and about the Black American's "happiness." Once again, Hughes' poetic techniques have characteristically combined the major features of Black literary rhetoric.

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The following course outlines are for courses which would cover some of the major areas discussed above. These courses are envisaged as a two- or three-part program. In view of the range of materials envisaged here it would be essential to approach the teaching of each course within a multi-media context, and because of this, any detailed planning for the curricula should consider innovative teaching methods wherever appropriate.

Course I is a study of Black rhetoric, defined as communication, with emphasis on the complex, interactive patterns which include Black vocabulary, tonal rhythms, and music. Ideally, materials for the course should include not only conventional linguistic structures (vocabulary and morphological forms), but also music and dance, in so far as these interact with, and influence, verbal forms of communication in Black America.

1. Vocabulary and Grammar: The Socio-Linguistic and Black Language
   Music and Black Language
   The Vocabulary of Music as Communication
2. Historical Sources and Archetypes: The Black Church and secular-religious interaction in Black rhetoric.
   Slave Culture and Language (animal stories, work songs, linguistic/musical forms)
   Ethnic Archetypes And Styles In Communication (eg. Uncle Tom, Peaches, Geraldine, etc)
   Urban Life-Styles and Black Language

Suggested Selected Materials: Major, Clarence, Dictionary Afro-American Slang (New York: International Pubs., 1970)
Gold, Robert S, A Jazz Lexicon (New York: Knopf, 1964).
Horne, L., Miptionary (New York: Simon Schuster, 1963)
Hughes, L. & A. Bontemps (eds) The Book of Negro Folklore (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1958)
Hurston, Zora N, Mules and Men, Perennial ed (New York, Harper & Row, 1970)
Jones, LeRoi, Blues People (New York: Apollo, 1963)
Nicholas, A. X. (ed) The Poetry of Soul (New York: Bantam, 1971)
Johnson, J.W. The Books of American Negro Spirituals (New York: Viking, 1969).
Johnson, J.W. God's Trombones (New York: Viking, 1927).
Charters, S, The Poetry of the Blues (New York: Avon, 1970)

Musical selections by Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, James Brown, B.B. King, Bessie Smith, Billy Holiday

Course II extends the study of rhetorical interaction by examining the interplay of White media and Black modes of communication. An essential feature of such a course would be a thorough-going examination of White media, especially of those images/stereotypes through which "new" or "outside" movements are "popularized," and distorted. And this examination will rely on some of the skills of literary criticism and analysis, particularly in the investigation of language, symbols, and archetypes in the written and broadcast media. In some respects this would all involve an updating of, and "ethnic" elaboration on, earlier works like Marshall MacLuhan's Mechanical Bride and Understanding Media. Secondly, the course would pinpoint those areas of Black rhetoric in which there is a continuing interaction with the co-optive instincts and images of the White media.

White Media and Black Modes of Communication

1. The Counter-Culture and the Mass Media
   Student Revolt
   Women's Liberation
   The "New Left"
   Media reaction/use of counter-culture rhetoric
   Structure and function of political images in commercials and entertainment

2. Black America's allegiance to, and "outsider" status in, mainstream culture
   Black music in White America
   Black vocabulary in popular media
   Black-White interaction in Black language arts
   The rhetoric of civil rights in the media
   The rhetoric of Black cultural revolution in the media
   Black images in television and the movies

Suggested Selected Materials: MacLuhan, M. Understanding Media (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964)
MacLuhan, M. The Mechanical Bride (Boston: Beacon, 1951)
Mid, H.W (ed), Grooving the Symbol (New York: Macmillan, 1970)
Gross, T.L. (ed) Representative Men (New York: Macmillan, 1970)
Kofsky, F. Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music (New York: Pathfinder, 1970)
Jones, L. Blues People
Home (New York: Morrow, 1968)
Cleaver, E. Soul On Ice (New York: Dell, 1968)
Post-Prison Writings Speeches (New York:

'intage, 1969).
Malcolm A, Malcolm A Speaks,(New York: Merit, 1965)
Autobiography (New York: Grove, 1964)
Fishwick, M., Remus Rastus Revolution (Bowling Green, Bowling Green University Press, 1971)

Course III will investigate the various techniques (tone, rhythm, vocabulary, symbolism) by which the poets, novelists and dramatists exploit or exemplify the ambiguities and Black-White tensions of Black communication. Ideally, the materials chosen and the teaching emphasis of the course should allow the student to perceive Black literature, not as an esoteric exercise, or as an ornament of Black culture, but as a vital mode of communication -- a mode which is in turn derived from a synthesis of those interacting modes in the general area of Black communication. In effect, therefore, this course will study the Black writer's relationship with those forms of rhetorical interaction which are the subject of Courses I & II.

1. The Mask as a communication symbol: Rhetorical Modes of Protest in Black Literature
   Black Writer, White Reader
   Black Writer, Black Reader
2. Music in Black Literature: James W. Johnson and the Spirituals
   Langston Hughes and the Black Musician
   Black Nationalism and Music in LeRoi Jones
   The Jazz Artist as Poet
   The Poet as Musician: Black Poetry of the Seventies
3. Religious Rhetoric in Black Literature: The Pulpit in the Novel (Baldwin)
   Religious Rhetoric as Protest in Black Poetry (eg. Sterling Brown)
   Black Revolutionary Theatre and Rhetorical Traditions in the Black Church
4. The Black Writer and Modes of Communication in Folklore:
   Ralph Ellison and Folklore Archetypes
   Zora Neale Hurston and the Rhetoric of Black Folktales

Suggested Selected Readings: Dunbar, P. Collected Poems (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1913)
Hughes, L, Selected Poems (New York: Knopf, 1959)
Best of Simple (New York, Hill &wang, 1961)
Jones, L. Black Magic (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, (1969)
Four Black Revolutionary Plays (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969).
System of Dante's Hell (New York: Grove, 1963)
Sanchez, S. We A BaaDD People (Detroit: Broadside, 1970)
Lee, Don L. Don't Cry Scream (Detroit: Broadside,1970)
Giovanni, N., Black Feeling Black Talk (Detroit: Broadside, 1970)
Brooks, G., Selected Poems (New York: Harper & Row, 1963)
Walker, M., For My People (New Haven: Yale U. P. 1942)
Wright, R. Native Son (New York: Harper, 1940)
Baldwin, J. Go Tell It On the Mountain (New York: Dial, 1953)
Toomer, J. Cane (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1923).
Ellison, R. Invisible Man (New York: Random House, 1952)
Bullins, Ed Five Plays (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968)
Reed, I. Yellow Back Radio Broke Down (New York: Doubleday, 1969)
Joans, Ted, Black Pow-wow (New York: Hill & Wang, 1969)
Chestnutt, C.W. The Conjure Woman, Ann Arbor Paper ed (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan P.,1969)

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